



National Human Rights Institutions and the International Human Rights System

Manila, 20-24 April 2009

Workshop Concept Note

I. Background

Increasingly, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) have been engaging with various international bodies, including the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). To ensure their effectiveness within the international human rights system, NHRIs will need a clear understanding of their own roles and potential, as well as the roles and functions of the various international human rights mechanisms.

This workshop will aim to build the internal capacity of NHRI officers in Southeast Asia. This workshop is intended as an introductory course, and is particularly suited for new officers who will require knowledge of the international human rights system, and officers who have not previously participated in training on the international human rights machinery.

II. The workshop

Dates

20-24 April 2009

Host Institution

Philippines Commission on Human Rights

Logistics

An information note will be sent directly to nominated participants, outlining details regarding the venue, accommodation and other logistical arrangements for the workshop. In the meanwhile, it is strongly recommended that nominated participants begin making their air-travel arrangements, in accordance with the funding guidelines specified in the invitation letters. Flight itineraries should be provided to the APF secretariat as soon as possible.

Objectives

At the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Explain that human rights are universal, indivisible, inherent, inalienable, and interdependent, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- Apply the international standards for NHRIs as set out in the Paris Principles (PPs), and to develop existing and new NHRIs in accordance with the PPs.
- Ensure that NHRIs more effectively fulfill their responsibilities, according to international standards, in promoting and protecting human rights within the country.
- Work effectively with the regional and international NHRI organizations.

- Interact more effectively with the international human rights system

Training Methodology

The lead trainer for this workshop will be Mr. Christopher Sidoti, former Australian Federal Human Rights Commissioner and former Director of the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) in Geneva. Mr Sidoti will be assisted by Ms Suraina Pasha, the APF's Project Manager for Regional Training.

An experiential learning approach will be taken in the training, emphasizing adult education techniques and learning principles. While power-points will be used, the course will utilize extensive learner centered tasks such as role-plays, debates, group discussions, and case studies.

Language

The language of instruction will be English. The core training manual will also be in English. Therefore, strong English language skills are essential for effective participation in this workshop.

Key Programme Content and Sequence

The workshop programme is currently being finalised. It is expected that the final programme will include the following sessions:

- I. Introduction
 - A. Welcome
 - B. Introductions of participants and trainers
 - C. Expectations
 - D. Review agenda and objectives
 - E. Group norms

- II. Defining Human Rights
 - A. Core concepts - universal, inherent, interdependent, indivisible, and inalienable; the state duty to respect, protect and fulfill
 - B. Short history including Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- III. International Human Rights Law
 - A. Declarations, conventions, etc.
 - B. Soft law

- IV. Definition NHRIs – promoting and protecting
 - A. Paris Principles
 - B. NHRIs, NGOs, State Party

- V. NHRIs - Developing a common system – (Paris Principles, Introduction)

- VI. Composition and guarantees of independence and pluralism of NHRIs
 - A. Define independence as relates to NHRIs
 - B. Define pluralism as relates to NHRIs
 - C. Members
 - D. Funding

- VII. NHRIs Methods of Operation (Paris Principles, C)

- VIII. NHRIs Roles and Functions (Paris Principles, A)
 - A. Broad mandate
 - B. Monitor any situation of violation of human rights, which it decides to take up
 - C. Advise the Government, the Parliament and any other competent body on specific violations”
 - D. Relate to regional and international organizations.
 - E. Educate and inform...
 - F. Quasi-judicial competence
- IX. Regional NHRI networks
- X. International NHRI networks
- XI. Overview of the UN System including Charter Based
- XII. UN Reform
 - A. In Larger Freedom
- XIII. Human Rights Reform
 - A. Commission to Council, including Universal Period Review
 - B. NHRI’s role in the Commission
 - C. NHRI’s role in the Council
- XIV. Special Procedures
 - A. Country (13)
 - B. Thematic (28)
 - C. NHRI’s role – communication, general briefings, country visits
 - D. Working with NGOs
- XV. Treaty Monitoring Bodies (TMBs)
 - A. 7 treaties – 7 bodies
 - B. functions of TMBs and State Parties
 - C. Reporting cycle
 - D. NHRI roles
 - E. Treaty Body reform
 - F. New Treaty Bodies
 - G. Working with NGOs
- XVI. Recap
- XVII. Next Steps
- XVIII. Evaluation